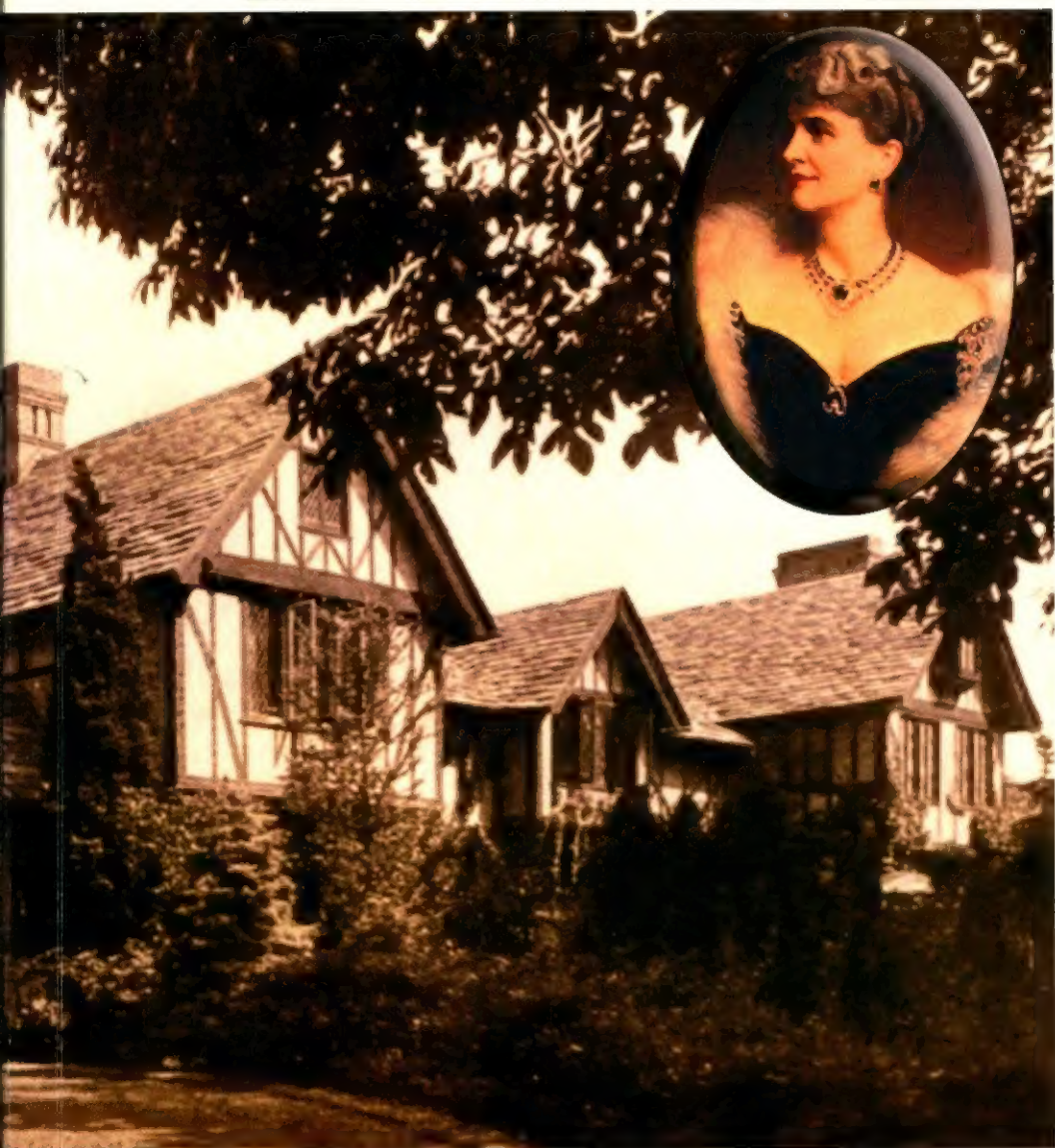


Hillwood: The Long Island Estate of Marjorie Merriweather Post



By Kenneth G. Mensing and Rita Langdon

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ISBN: 978-0-9792850-0-4

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A Visionary Woman and Her Country Estate



Marjorie Merriweather Post

Photo Credit: Hillwood Museum & Gardens, Washington, D.C.

*T*he majestic Tudor-revival mansion that is the centerpiece of the C.W. Post Campus of Long Island University symbolizes a magical moment in American history when wealth, grace, glamour and high society embraced Long Island's North Shore.

From the dawn of the Roaring '20s through 1951, the mansion and its manicured 178 acres of land was the Long Island country retreat for Marjorie Merriweather Post, the daughter of cereal titan Charles William (C.W.) Post. Marjorie and her second husband, Edward F. Hutton of Wall Street brokerage fame, purchased the Wheatley Hills property (later zoned Brookville) in 1921 for \$400,000 from New York financier William A. Prime and his wife, Nina.

Considered a charming, rural escape from the sounds and fast pace of New York City, the Huttons' estate was a private destination for swimming, horseback riding, golf, garden parties, teas and other activities that appealed to upper class society in the 1920s.



A bird's eye view of Hillwood. Northern Boulevard (then called North Hempstead Turnpike) can be seen on the left, circa 1945.

The property originally housed a modest home (named Warburton Hall by the Primes), which was in the Spanish architectural style. This home was designed in 1911 by Addison Mizner of Palm Beach fame. With the exception of the Primes' reception room (the current Great Hall), dining room (current entrance hall/foyer) and kitchen (today the Hunt Room), nothing of the original house remains.

The estate, which the Huttons renamed Hillwood for its rolling hills and wooded terrain, would eventually be crowned with a glorious 59 room Tudor revival-style mansion constructed high on a knoll at the center of the property. The building, which incorporated three remaining rooms of the Prime residence, would become an architectural masterpiece with carved soffits, leaded windows, and rough-hewn half-timbered patterns with Tudor and medieval period designs. Designed by Charles Mansfield Hart of the New York City firm Hart & Shape, the residence would be constructed over an eight-year period from 1921 to 1929, and when completed would span 30,000 square feet.

In 1921 E.W. Howell and Company of Babylon, N.Y. constructed a major portion of the building, which included a wing of bedrooms and a library. Marjorie also converted the Primes' kitchen into a dining room (the Hunt Room). In 1928

Hart was again commissioned to design further additions and alterations to the house, which included the removal and replacement of the 1921 bedroom wing. In its place, a Venetian Room, new entranceway, guest bedrooms and a newly designed library on the first floor were built. New master bedroom suites, two sleeping porches and children's bedrooms were constructed on the second floor of the new wing. Watts and Sinclair Inc. of New York City was responsible for constructing these additions.

The mansion stands at the top of the sloping Great Lawn, which features E.F. Hutton's putting green, and is surrounded by formal gardens and a stand of forest. The exterior of the house is detailed with decorative soffit carvings that portray various animals such as bears, tigers and exotic birds of prey, as well as flowers and ornamental designs commonly found in Tudor architecture. Although the exterior of the building features half-timber and stucco, in some areas the stucco is deliberately absent, revealing brick and stone for an aged appearance (see page 46). The mansion features leaded casement windows (purchased from Thomas Jones Decorative Glass Co.), several of which contain images of ships, crests, flowers and medieval characters. Within the enormous windows of the Great Hall, the Hutton and Post ancestral crests are beautifully depicted in stained glass.



*Marjorie Merriweather Post with pet dog, 1923,
outside the Great Hall,*

Photo Credit: Hillwood Museum & Gardens, Washington, D.C.



The mansion's front door, circa 1926

The west facade overlooking the Great Lawn includes five picturesque gables, three of which contain carvings of grapes on the vine. The west side of the house contains busts of terriers and carvings of a court jester, a fox and hunter and cornucopias with flowers. Similarly elaborate and fanciful carvings are found elsewhere on the building. Perhaps the most charming example is outside the house's nursery: Here the carvings depict a monkey, an elephant, a giraffe, a tiger, a goose, a bear standing on its hind legs, budding flowers, tulips and grapes.

Located on the northern end of the mansion is the staff wing. The two-and-one-half story service area at one time contained the kitchen, pantry, laundry room, staff dining room, sewing room and security office as well as numerous staff bedrooms and social areas. Although this section of the mansion has less ornamentation than other areas, its overall atmosphere blends perfectly with the remainder of the structure. This section features two porte-cochères, or carriageways. Above the porte-cochère on the western elevation is a room with leaded windows containing stained glass.

Since Long Island University purchased the property in 1951 (then called the Davies' estate after Marjorie's third husband Joseph E. Davies), alterations to the mansion's exterior have been few. An entrance was built on the west side (now the Provost's Office), overlooking the Great Lawn, in 1957. This was executed with such high regard for the architecture that it could almost pass as original to the structure. The small porch behind the Venetian Room (today the Provost's filing room) and a larger porch on the first floor of the children's/guest wing (today the office of the Assistant Provost for Campus Services) were enclosed in 1973. The windows used for the enclosure of the larger porch nicely match the original windows of the mansion. Due to fire regulations, four fire escapes were added to the house. Although a necessity, these fire escapes do obstruct some of the detail in parts of the building. A glass and aluminum vestibule, which was an unflattering addition to the foyer on the eastern elevation, was removed in 2005 and a stone, stucco and beam foyer with slate roof was built in its place.



The front entrance to the Great Hall as it appeared circa 1935.



The mansion's roof spans 30,000 square feet.

Slate Roof

The gabled roof of the mansion is made of exquisite slate in variegated colors. The slates are consistent with those quarried in Vermont. Due to the roof's enormous weight (some tiles are 1 1/2 inches thick), the individual slates were brought to Long Island via the railroad and then trucked to the site for installation. Interestingly, the slates that were installed in 1921 are much larger than those installed on the 1928 addition of the mansion's south wing. The life expectancy for a slate roof of this type is about 120 years. Slate roofs of this kind were commonplace on dwellings built and owned by the more affluent members of American society. The house features nine terracotta and brick chimneys. Some of the chimney designs are reminiscent of those commonly found in Tudor manor houses.

Great Hall

The interior of Hillwood has undergone some structural changes over the years to accommodate various University offices, however, the character of the front entrance and the main living room has remained intact. The front entrance features a room with thick ceiling beams, leaded windows and a stone fireplace adorned with carved figures of medieval monks. The walls in this room are

linen-fold carved panels. This same paneling can be found in other areas of the mansion. The entrance hall contains a doorway leading into the two-story Great Hall, with its exquisite wood rafters supported by ornately carved columns. This room truly can be considered the heart of Hillwood. On the east wall a huge fireplace (its andirons are original to the house) surrounded by massive leaded windows is quite an impressive sight. On the north wall of the Great Hall is a carved staircase that leads to a beautifully carved balcony, created by Marius Anderson Stairbuilder of Brooklyn in 1925 at a cost of \$855.

A close look at the original carvings and decorations of the Great Hall reveals a nautical motif. A large model of an English galleon once hung from the ceiling. Brass sconces on the face of the balcony depict ships with billowing sails, while similar pieces across the room and flanking the fireplace feature dolphins and seagulls. Images of ships also are found scattered among the panes of the room's tall windows, and the decorative plaster border that encircles the entire room features the head of the mythological god Poseidon throughout. Mr. Hutton's love of the ocean certainly influenced the theme.



Mr. Hutton's penchant for the sea is reflected in the nautical appointments of this spectacular room, the Great Hall, circa 1935.



Breakfast and lunch were served in the Hunt Room, circa 1925, which resembled a Tudor hunting lodge.

Hunt Room

At the bottom of the Great Hall staircase is the doorway to the Hunt Room. A leaded glass pocket door can close this room off from the Great Hall. The Hunt Room walls are paneled to the midway point. The top portions of the walls match the exterior of the mansion with half-timbered wood and stucco. The ceiling of this room is made of hand-hewn wood panels. Four small brass lanterns with eisenglass hang from the ceiling. Four additional lanterns adorn the walls of the room. A charming stone fireplace with an arched bay is located in the center of two inglenooks. To the right of the fireplace is a small storage cabinet that, in an authentic Tudor home, would have been the location for a bake oven. On the eastern wall of the Hunt Room there are two leaded glass pocket doors similar to the one off the Great Hall.

Formal Dining Room

(Today the Office of the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences)

Passing through the doors of the Hunt Room, you enter a very small butler's pantry. Past the butler's pantry you enter the formal dining room. The decor of this room is in the Federal style rather than the Tudor style found in the other public

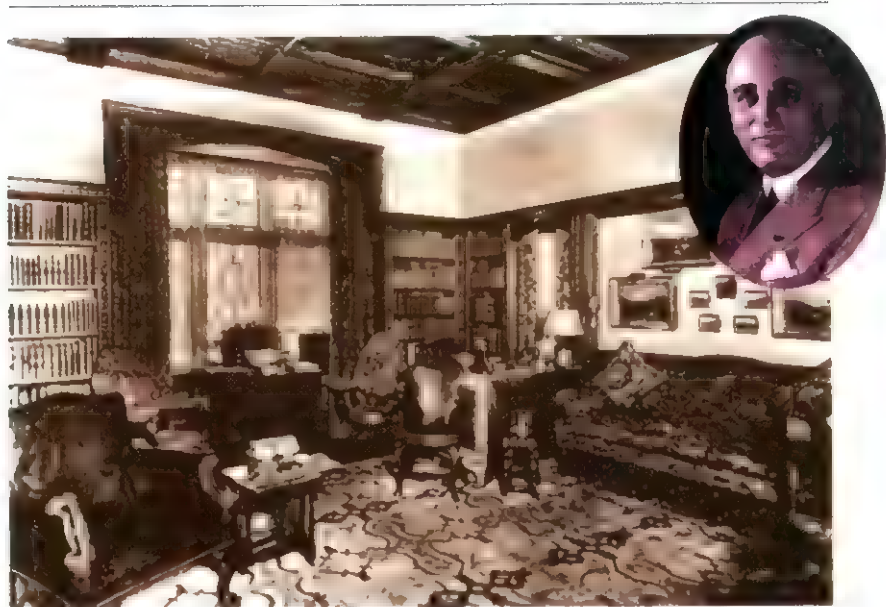
rooms. The walls were once painted with outdoor scenes. Doorways on either side of the fireplace have been covered by bookcases. Beyond that, however, the room has changed little. The fireplace, which features a beautiful wood and marble mantelpiece, remains today. A wonderful feature in this room is the window seat on the south wall. When the mansion was constructed, the windows were made of rectangular glass panes containing leaded figures of a horse, pelican, rooster, wolf, sheep, fish and bird.

Entrance to the Library

At the other end of the Great Hall, a smaller pocket door leads into a short hallway that is rich in creative detail. Molded onto the plaster walls are raised relief figures of geese, owls, a sea monster, lions and a wild boar. This motif is continued into the foyer, which is crowned by an ornate plaster ceiling from which a wrought-iron light fixture hangs. (Smaller, matching fixtures can be found at the top of the staircase, as well as in the hallway connecting the master bedroom suites on the second floor.)



Dining Room, circa 1940



The library, circa 1937, as it appeared when Marjorie was married to the U.S. Ambassador to Russia, Joseph E. Davies.

Photo Credit for Davies: Hillwood Museum & Gardens, Washington, D.C.

Library

(Today the Provost's Library)

The mansion's library, accessible from the Great Hall, foyer and Venetian Room, is graced with masterful woodwork. The pocket door from the Great Hall into the library is comprised of 12 linen-fold panels. Oak carvings created by Bottino & Degata of New York also grace the doorways. A cornice above this pocket door has six intricately carved panels that reflect scholarship. The lower center panel contains an owl, inkwell with plume pen and a candle sitting on top of books (see page 37). Carved in the top center panel is the Hutton ancestral crest. The remaining panels include images reminiscent of Poseidon (similar to the ones found in the Great Hall) and mythological sea creatures.

Inside, a magnificent carved floor-to-ceiling fireplace dominates the library's southern wall. The intricate carving of the fireplace is enhanced by the simplicity of the other woodwork in the room. Ships' bowsprits jut from the wall on either side of the fireplace, featuring images of women with chains instead of legs. The mantel appears to be held up by half-human, half-animal figures (see pages 37). The stone portion of the fireplace contains some symbolism as well. On the left are four fishes. On the right, an enormous Tudor rose reminds one that this is an

Elizabethan dwelling. Four built-in bookcases, framed with a simply carved leaf design, outline the rest of the room. The library ceiling is made of rough-hewn panels. Two large beams in the ceiling are carved with vines and bunches of grapes. The University painted the flat ceiling panels white to brighten the room. The western wall of the room offers a view of the Great Lawn through leaded windows that were moved from the Great Hall in 1928 to this location. During a 2005-2006 restoration, the windows in the library were replicated and replaced.

The Venetian Room

(Today the Provost's Office)

To the right of the library fireplace is a doorway that leads to a long corridor. At the end of the corridor is the Venetian Room, also known as the solarium. The door to the Venetian Room is made of heavy wrought iron and leaded glass. Above two doorways is the head of Medusa. The Venetian Room has a tropical feeling to its décor. The floor is comprised of multi-colored slates.

At one time the floor beneath the huge bay windows had been soil, where small fruit trees and other plantings grew, but has since been covered with



Venetian Room, circa 1930



American Bedroom, circa 1929

matching slate. Huge timbers frame out the three bay windows. Wrought-iron lanterns hung from the center of the leaded glass ceiling of each bay window. A stone fountain, which no longer functions, is built into a recess in the north wall. (The largest boulder was acquired from a Port Washington, N.Y. sand pit in 1929.) Two wrought-iron lanterns hang on either side of the fountain.

American Bedroom

(Today the Provost's Reception Area)

Off the corridor that connects the Venetian Room and Library is the American Bedroom, which also can be accessed from the mansion's main foyer. The room, primarily used for guests, is designed in the Federal style. Walls in this room are decorated with hand-painted wallpaper depicting events leading up to and including the inauguration of George Washington. One view depicts St. Paul's Chapel in lower Manhattan where Washington worshipped just prior to the inauguration.

The private bathroom connected to this room is of particular interest. This bathroom is tiled midway with green tile. Above the tile the entire wall surface is covered with antique Christmas cards given to Marjorie (see page 36). Some of the cards have personal notes written on them. Today, the plumbing fixtures are gone and the room houses office equipment.

Foyer

The foyer staircase outside the American Bedroom contains several beautifully carved figures. Underneath the balustrade of the staircase are figures of hunters on foot and on horseback chasing deer through a forest. The staircase landing contains magnificent windows within a beautifully carved frame. Directly underneath these windows is a decorative wrought-iron heat register depicting Tudor roses as well as other flowers. Looking down from the stairwell landing toward the foyer is an intricately carved arch that separates the foyer from the foot of the stairwell. Cherubs and flowers are represented in this carving.

Marjorie's Master Bedroom

(Today the Chancellor's Office)

The room that had originally been the master bedroom suite for Marjorie is at the end of the second floor hallway. The hallway contains a gothic ribbed plaster ceiling with decorative capitols. Just outside of the entrance to the room is a small alcove with a decorative plaster ceiling. There are three doors in this alcove.



Bedroom of Marjorie Merriweather Post, circa 1939



Fireplace and mantel within the Olympian alcove of Marjorie Merriweather Post's bedroom, circa 1939

One leads to the master suite, the second to the adjoining dressing room and the third into another room, which once was a screened sleeping porch. Lovely carvings and Wedgwood medallions originally adorned the tops of these three doorways. One sole medallion remains (see page 36) in a classroom at the Washington International School, Tregaron Campus, in Washington, D.C., which is another former residence of Marjorie and third husband Joseph E. Davies.

Marjorie's bedroom was decorated in the Adam style. Unlike the rest of the house with its dark wood and numerous carvings, this room is quite bright. Although presently used as an office, the room still retains its warm charm. The magnificent Adam-style plaster ceiling and crown molding are quite impressive. Marjorie removed the original crystal chandelier (now located in Hillwood Museum & Gardens, Washington, D.C.) when the estate was sold to Long Island University. The fireplace in this room is located in an Olympian alcove with shelving niches on either side. The original mantel containing Wedgwood medallions was removed when Marjorie sold the house to Long Island University and replaced with a Spanish-style mantel believed to be from the Prime's original interiors. The floor in front of the fireplace and the base molding in the room are made of marble. Marble work in this room was created by P.M. & W. Schlichter.

A door to the right of the fireplace leads to what had been the private bathroom/dressing room of Marjorie (now a Student Affairs office). The walls in this room are framed with marble arches and ceramic tile. The eastern wall is entirely marble. The marble bathtub and sink as well as the gold fixtures, crystal chandelier and sconces were removed by Marjorie when the estate was sold to the University. The door to the left of the fireplace leads to a large walk-in closet. This closet has two small windows with leaded glass.

Edward F. Hutton Bedroom

(Today the Office of the Associate Provost for Student Affairs)

Mr. Hutton's bedroom suite originally featured murals of Mar-a-Lago, the Huttons' Florida residence. Sometime in the early 1930s, these murals were either covered or removed and replaced with knotty pine paneling. The fate of the murals is unknown. At the request of Marjorie, this room was dismantled at the sale of the estate to the University. A different shade of knotty pine was then installed, giving the room a darker appearance. Although a charming room, it was much more impressive when its original appointments were in place. Interestingly, the original mantel removed with the other interiors was replaced with an exact duplicate of the Spanish mantel today found in Marjorie's former bedroom. This



*E F Hutton's bedroom walls featured murals of the Huttons' Florida residence, Mar-a-Lago
Photos: Hillwood Museum & Gardens, Washington, D.C.*



Daughter Dina's bedroom, circa 1935

coincidence further reinforces the belief that the mantels from the Prime residence were saved for possible use in the future.

Dina Hutton Bedroom/Children's Wing

(Today the Office of the Associate Provost for Enrollment Services)

At the top of the staircase and to the right, near the master bedroom suite, is a corridor leading into what had been the children's wing. The entrance to this corridor at one time had been open. The University installed a decorative door consistent with the style of the interior of the mansion. The corridor has the same ribbed ceiling found outside the master bedroom suites. A plaster medallion with an image of a small child is featured in a doorway arch (see page 36), which leads to a hallway and former sleeping porch. Next to the curved wall of the children's wing hallway is a door that leads to what had at one time been the bedroom of the Huttons' daughter, Nedenia, who today is the actress Dina Merrill. The room originally was very bright with simple wallpaper and wood wainscoting. A window seat on the south wall overlooked the splendid walled garden and Magnolia Walk. The wooden fireplace, though not ornate, fits very nicely in this environment. To the left of the fireplace was a doorway that led to a screened-in sleeping porch. The walls of the sleeping porch are framed with half timbers and stucco. The University replaced the original screens with leaded glass windows that nicely matched other windows in the mansion.

In 1973 the University enclosed the first floor open porch, located directly below the sleeping porch of the children's wing. An attempt to mirror the original architectural theme of the mansion was somewhat successful. Unfortunately, the carved pillars of the porch were not properly incorporated into the enclosure and the upper portions of the pillars protrude through the stucco walls near the ceiling. The beautiful stone and slate floor was another casualty of this alteration project. Originally one step down from the house, the University desired that this newly enclosed room be the same level as the connecting rooms. Concrete was poured over the floor to raise it.

Guest Rooms and Staff Quarters

At the top of the Great Hall staircase was a guest bedroom that today serves as the Office of the Assistant Provost for Enrollment Services. Also at the top of the Great Hall staircase is a door leading to a serpentine corridor and a number of guest and staff rooms. The corridor soon forks, with a short hallway to the right leading to two guest rooms, two bathrooms and two small rooms thought to have been used by guests' staff members. These rooms, including the former lavatories, are today the Office of Public Relations. Along the left fork of the hallway are former bedrooms, sitting rooms and a staff dining room. Some of these rooms have been enlarged or



Portion of staff wing, circa 1926



A guest bedroom, circa 1930

divided, based on the need for University office space. The room directly over the main porte-cochère originally had leaded windows containing stained glass symbols. This room is thought to have been the bedroom of the mansion's major domo.

Originally the hallway turned to the right and crossed over the top of the second porte-cochère to a two-story staff wing. It can no longer be reached via the second floor hallway; the corridor over the porte-cochère was sealed off. At the point where the hallway turned to the right, a staircase leads down to what had originally been a group of four rooms on the first floor. The intended purpose of these rooms is unknown, but the University put them to use as the C.W. Post Campus mailroom. The Campus salvaged the original service windows and mailboxes from the Greenvale, N.Y. post office in the 1960s and installed them here. The mailroom was removed in 2003, and the rooms today serve as classrooms.

Estate Gardens

The formal gardens that surround the mansion and the ornate, turreted house next door built for Marjorie's daughter, Adelaide Brevoort Close, were designed by renowned landscape architect Marian Cruger Coffin. These gardens, which cover two acres, are considered to be among Coffin's greatest triumphs.

Coffin was commissioned by the Huttons in 1922 to create gardens that would complement the Elizabethan home, which was being constructed at the same time. Coffin often worked very closely with her clients' architects to achieve the appropriate balance between house and landscape. Lewis and Valentine Co. of Greenvale, N.Y. was hired to coordinate the plantings for the gardens according to Coffin's specifications. Two of the nurseries that supplied plantings, shrubs, seeds and trees to Lewis and Valentine were Bobbink & Atkins of Rutherford, N.J. and Henry A. Dreer of Riverton, N.J.

Coffin had mastered the technique of transplanting fully grown trees from other locations into the gardens she was creating. A letter dated Feb. 23, 1922 documents her employment of this technique at Hillwood. A 1925 photograph of the eastern side of the mansion shows two mature vase-shaped elm trees (see page 38), anchored to the ground with ropes. Coffin believed that



Looking west toward the mansion, circa 1940



*Marjorie Merriweather Post with daughters Eleanor (left) and Adelaide (right)
at the foot of the Rose Arbor, 1923*

Photo Credit Hillwood Museum & Gardens, Washington, D C

transplanting fully grown trees gave one the impression that the mansion and its gardens were older.

Coffin left no detail untouched. Her work started at the main gate on Northern Boulevard and continued up to and including the mansion and its immediate surroundings. The driveway was planned to give the visitor the impression that he or she was entering the grounds of an authentic Tudor estate in England. The red clay driveway, lined with stately trees and boxwood hedges, curved past simple outer buildings and then turned east toward the manor house. Coffin clearly wanted a visitor's first view of the mansion to be impressive.

Each of the gardens Coffin designed for the estate had its own character and, yet together, functioned as a whole.

English Brick Garden

Outside the Venetian Room is a walled garden. Coffin designed this garden not only with brick walls, but with brick paths and four lovely brick benches. The original statues that stood at the four openings in the garden walls are now gone. A wrought-iron arch in the shape of vines with a lantern hanging in the center also is gone. Garden planning records from 1922 state that the flowers chosen would bloom in April and May and again in mid-fall. Since Hillwood was not the family's primary home, the blooming timetable gives a hint to the times of year the family was in residence.

Although the plantings have changed, the walled garden retains the original feeling it had in the early part of the 20th century.

Rose Arbor

On the southern outskirts of the formal gardens is an elevated grass knoll that leads to a splendid arched brick rose arbor. A double brick staircase leads from the grassy landing to the arbor, which stretches 175 feet. The arbor runs east to west and defines its eastern limit in a circle of arched brick piers. The semicircular



English Brick Garden, circa 1940

Photo Credit: Hillwood Museum & Gardens, Washington, D.C.



The estate's beautiful Magnolia Walk, circa 1930
Photo Courtesy: Nassau County Division of Museum Services Collection
Long Island Studies Institute of Hofstra University

bench incorporated into this circle is a signature design element found in many gardens created by Coffin. Thirty-eight brick piers make up the arbor (see page 35).

Magnolia Walk

A small flight of brick steps on the eastern side of the walled garden once led to a double row magnolia allée. Originally framed by sheared cedar hedges, the area featured beautiful Chinese magnolia trees edged by dwarf English boxwoods. The Magnolia Walk extended from the children's wing of the mansion to the rose arbor. In September 2003 new magnolia trees were planted in the same location as the original trees.

A tennis court surrounded by a wood trellis with flowers was up another flight of stairs just east of the Magnolia Walk. The tennis court no longer exists; a labyrinth was built on the site in 2000.

Topiary Garden

Particularly appropriate for houses in the Tudor style was a topiary garden. The Huttons had one, but not for long – they replaced it with a swimming pool. Hedges trimmed into the shapes of rabbits, ducks, chickens and other animals were represented in the topiary garden. Numerous topiary figures (possibly moved from

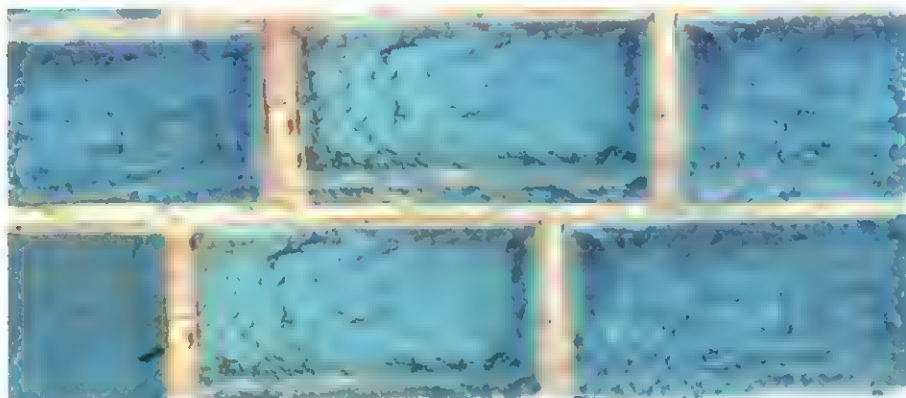
the original garden) could be found in later years in the walled garden and the courtyard on the north side of the Great Hall. Unfortunately, the figures no longer exist.

Water Garden

The final feature that Coffin created at Hillwood was a water garden – a flower-lined stream flowing past the tennis court into a small pond just east of the Magnolia Walk. The water was supplied by a domestic waterline from Adelaide's home (see page 27), not, as some have said, by a natural spring. Over the years, overgrown foliage had choked the flow of the stream. To restore the water garden, Blanche Karlan, a neighbor and friend of the University, donated \$100,000 in 2001. These funds were used to remove the overgrowth; fix the pond so that the water circulates; complete a 47-foot labyrinth on the site of the old tennis court; build a bridge to it; repair the current bridge and path behind the Admissions building; and add some benches along the walkway. The area was named the Karlan/Geisman Meditation Garden, in memory of Mrs. Karlan's husband Lazarus, daughter Penny, and son-in-law Richard.



Water Garden, circa 1923



Pool tile, circa 1925

Estate Pool

An in-ground pool was installed by the Huttons sometime after the estate was purchased. The pool measured 20 by 80 feet with a depth that ranged from three feet to eight feet. The inside of the pool had a 10-inch wide border around the top consisting of small, aquamarine ceramic tiles of various sizes (one inch to two inches) installed individually by hand. The ladder to enter the deep end of the pool was made of bronze. The steps were made of bronze and wooden planks. It was believed that many of the estate's famous guests swam in this pool. The pool was located a few feet from the Deen-Wee play house. After the University purchased the estate, the pool was enclosed and used by C.W. Post students for recreation. The pool was demolished on December 14, 2001 because the University built a new recreation center with an eight-lane swimming pool on the other side of the campus. A greenhouse, donated by former Miracle-Gro® CEO Horace Hagedorn of Port Washington, N.Y., was erected on the site in 2002.

Deen-Wee

(Child's Playhouse)

East of Adelaide's residence is a small play cottage originally called the Deen-Wee. This structure was built around 1934 for the Hutton's daughter, Nedenna, (publicly known as the actress Dina Merrill) and Marjorie's granddaughter, Marjorie, also known as Marwee. With its half-timbered and stucco walls, this charming little cottage is reminiscent of the nearby main house and

Adelaide's smaller residence. The original roof was made of thatch that had grown on the estate. Due to high maintenance, the University replaced the thatch in the early 1960s with slate that matched the two nearby dwellings.

Although scaled smaller to accommodate children, the workmanship evident in the Deen-Wee is comparable to that of the mansion itself. Hand-hewn wooden beams frame plaster walls. The beamed ceiling is reminiscent of the Hunt Room in the mansion. Directly opposite the front door is a small functioning fireplace. To the right of the fireplace is a built-in bookcase. A door to the right of the bookcase leads into a small kitchen. The original child-size sink and little faucets still exist. To the right of the kitchen sink is a door with a leaded glass panel. This door leads to a small covered patio with a brick floor. Recent renovations to the cottage revealed that the kitchen floor also is made of brick.

A lovely alcove with five leaded windows is located to the left of the main room. A miniature staircase next to this alcove leads to a second floor bedroom. Each step can accommodate the size of a child's foot. The second floor of the cottage is comprised of one room. A small lavatory is located next to this bedroom at the top of the stairs. There is no ornamentation on the second floor.

In a letter to Long Island University President David J. Steinberg in September 1993, Dina Merrill recalled fond memories of living on the estate and of her childhood playhouse: "I'm so pleased with the great success of the C.W. Post College and I know my Mother would be as well. I had such a happy childhood



Deen-Wee. circa 1934



From May through October 1940, the Ducal family of Luxembourg lived on the estate after they escaped the Nazi occupation of their homeland. Here, they are pictured outside the Deen-Wee.

Photo Courtesy: Bentley Historical Library

there, growing up on a 'farm' with every vegetable and fruit imaginable, flowers galore, a grassy hill to roll down (and sled down in winter), a pony to ride through the woods and imagine I was an Indian brave, and cows in the barn where I used to go on winter afternoons after school and milk myself a glass of warm foamy milk. Then the Deen-Wee cottage appeared, built for my niece and me where we played house, took naps, baked cookies in a mini-oven and made ice cream from scratch, churning it with ice and salt until it froze. There were also pet rabbits, two raccoons (who also ate the ice cream with great gusto) and some bantam hens who laid tiny delicious eggs. Those were good days."

Adelaide's Residence

(Today the Admissions Office)

In 1928, Marjorie constructed a 10,458 square-foot home for her daughter, Adelaide, and son-in-law, Thomas (Tim) Durant. Although similar to the main house, this structure has a character all its own. The first floor exterior consists of stucco, brick, stone and layered slate. The second floor, though less ornate, is reminiscent of the half-timbered style of the mansion. There are no carvings on this structure with the exception of two small decorative brackets located on the west top corners of what had originally been a sleeping porch. Flowers and vines are depicted in these brackets. The most striking characteristic of the structure is a brick and stone octagonal turret, constructed at a cost of \$21,000, on the south elevation of the building. The turret, which is raised one floor above the roof, has

the appearance of a medieval tower. At the base of the turret is a small man-made waterfall constructed of boulders, which serves as the beginning of the water garden's stream.

The exterior of the building has remained virtually as it was when constructed, with the exception of the first floor porch located on the western elevation, which was enclosed in the late 1950s. The character of the structure was taken into consideration when this porch was enclosed. The types of windows used throughout the enclosure are reminiscent of the metal-framed casements containing leaded glass that are found throughout the entire house.

The interior of the building has undergone extensive alterations over the years. The front door leads into a long, narrow hallway that goes nearly to the back of the building. This hallway has remained the same, with its walls of textured plaster. To the left of the front door is a large room, which may have been the living room of the house. Toward the end of the central hallway is the main



*The 30-room cottage Marjorie built in 1929 for eldest daughter
Adelaide and first husband Thomas Durant*

*Photo Courtesy Nassau County Division of Museum Services Collection,
Long Island Studies Institute at Hofstra University*



Adelaide's residence is visible from the Magnolia Walk, circa 1930

staircase, paneled midway up the wall and topped with textured plaster as in the main hallway below. Midway up the staircase is a platform with two leaded windows. The staircase turns here and continues to the second floor. The interior of the second floor has been changed so dramatically over the years to accommodate its use as a busy college admissions office that it would be difficult to determine how the rooms were originally laid out. From the second floor, the staircase continues up to the attics. Another platform midway up the stairs contains three smaller leaded windows made with diamond-shaped glass. At the top of the staircase there are three doors. Two lead into unfinished attic spaces. The center doorway is the entrance to the turret.

Inside the turret is a small room with two narrow windows. To the left of this room is a narrow staircase to the top of the turret. The turret room contains all windows. The first campus bookstore was located in the turret when the University started offering classes on the estate in 1951. The view of the gardens at this level must have been quite impressive in earlier days. From the turret one can see the beautiful slate roof of the house. The slate used on Adelaide's residence is identical to that of the mansion next door.

Post Cottage

(Today Kumble Hall)

The guest house, known as Post Cottage when the estate was privately owned, is by far the most impressive of the property's outbuildings. According to Sylvester Cangerio, a former employee of the Prime and Hutton families, it was originally constructed in 1911 as a chicken coop. In 2001, a photograph of the building was discovered in an album at the Woodbury, N.Y. offices of E.W. Howell Co., Inc. The construction company worked for the Huttons from 1922 to 1925 and the album contained photos of all the buildings they renovated or constructed; perhaps the chicken coop was converted by Howell into a guest house. The original structure remains intact, although a brick addition was connected to the rear of the structure in 1960 by the University.

The central portion of the building is three stories tall. Two one-and-a-half story wings protrude east and west from the central section of the building, with three distinctive dormer windows on both the north and south elevations of each wing. Post Cottage features a Victorian cornice with dental molding. The building was originally capped by an impressive copper-domed cupola with arched openings and dental molding below its cornice, but the cupola was removed in August 2004 due to its advanced age. On the end of the eastern wing is a small sun porch with a



*Post Cottage was built in 1911
Photo Credit: E.W. Howell Co., Inc.*

flat roof. The first two stories of the building are sided with cedar shingles. It is possible that the building was originally clapboard. The exterior of the third floor appears to be stucco but is in fact a smooth wood.

The interior of the former guest house has had some alterations. The first and second floors each contain a central or great room. A fireplace and mantel can be found in each central room. The fireplace on the first floor is very simple with no ornate detailing. Directly above on the second floor is a white colonial fireplace more in style with the building. The one-and-a-half story wings can be accessed from the central rooms.

The first floor of the western wing has been modified over the years. The eastern wing appears to be intact with the exception of minor changes. The first room on the left contains a small fireplace and has been divided into offices. The second room features a corner cabinet with a decorative shell top and delicate glass door. Enclosed staircases located in the center of each wing lead to the small attic storage areas above. These attic rooms contain simple built-in cabinets for storage. There are six curved doghouse windows in the roof of these attics. Located at the end of each attic are more windows. The windows on the eastern wing originally were comprised of a square double-hung central window flanked by two smaller rectangular windows. The western side has a large rounded window in the center.

Garage

(Today the Crafts Center)

The structure that currently houses the C.W. Post Campus' Crafts Center was originally the estate garage, which included a repair shop and living quarters for the chauffeurs. With the exception of a 1960 addition to the eastern elevation to enlarge the structure for classroom use, the building looks virtually the same as it did when constructed in 1928 by the Huttons.

The exterior of the building, like the nearby Post Cottage guest house, was originally sided with cedar shingles but now is covered with Cedar Impressions vinyl siding. The building has a charming "ski-jump" curved roofline with dental molding beneath the eaves. Six sets of garage doors (three on the east elevation and three on the west) were removed and replaced with windows similar to those original to the building.

Looking at the space today, it is difficult to identify the original floor plan for the first floor. Since the structure housed numerous automobiles, the space was probably a large open room. On the northern end of the building a few small rooms probably stored tools and parts for the vehicles. Numerous walls have been added to provide classrooms, office space, a kiln and pottery stations. The original



Estate garage and chauffeurs' quarters, circa 1925

wooden staircase (located in the center of the building) that led to the estate chauffeurs' quarters was removed and a new fireproof staircase was installed not far from the site of the original staircase.

There are 14 rooms on the second floor, which have been unused for many years. Air-conditioning ducts and telephone wiring have been run directly across the wood floor. In the center of the second floor, there is a large room that most likely served as the parlor. Smaller rooms, each originally equipped with a window, sink, medicine cabinet and small closet, once served as bedrooms. The University removed the sinks and medicine cabinets probably in preparation in the late 1950s for use as the Campus' first Field House. The bedrooms open onto a central hallway that runs the entire length of the second floor. It is unclear where lavatories and showers were located. Remnants of a kitchen are evident at the south end of the building.

Potting Shed

The Huttons constructed four greenhouses featuring prized orchids and a brick potting shed in 1928 on the site of an original potting shed belonging to the Prime family. The potting shed is a one-and-a-half story brick structure complete with a dirt floor cellar. Four glass greenhouses were attached to this brick structure, two on the western elevation and two on the eastern. Due to deterioration, the greenhouses were removed by the University over several years. The University demolished the last greenhouse on July 20, 2001. A new roof was installed on the potting shed in 1997.

Horse Stable

The estate's former horse stable now serves as the site of the J.M. Ladge Speech and Hearing Center and the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders. Sometime in the 1960s, the two original one-story wings of the stable were removed and relocated to the south side of the Campus. Soon after, the University constructed two new one-story wings of classrooms, laboratories and the Campus radio station, WCWP. The two-story center section of the original building is the only part of the stable that remains in this location today. Also moved to the south side was the nearby goat shed. The two wings were attached to each side of the goat shed to form the Campus' current horse stables. The North Shore Equestrian Center operates from this location today and is home to the award-winning C.W. Post Equestrian Team.



Daughter Dima with one of the estate's horses, circa 1930
Photo Courtesy: Bentley Historical Library



*Adelaide Brevoort Close, daughter of Marjorie
Merriweather Post, circa 1928
Photo Credit Hillwood Museum & Gardens,
Washington, D.C.*



*Unknown person, circa 1924
Photo Credit Hillwood Museum & Gardens*



*Adelaide Brevoort Close, circa 1924
Photo Credit Hillwood Museum & Gardens*



*Marjorie in the walled garden with Dina,
circa 1926
Photo Credit Hillwood Museum & Gardens*



*Marjorie (Marwee) Merriweather Durant,
granddaughter of Marjorie Merriweather Post
and daughter of Adelaide, circa 1930*



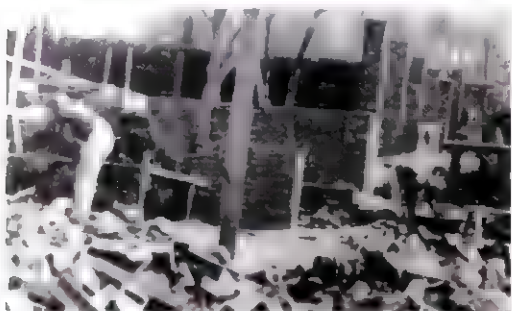
*Dina on swing
Photo Credit Hillwood Museum & Gardens*



Christmas 1939 in the Great Hall
 From left: Adelaide, Millard Tydings, Henry Close,
 unknown, unknown, Marjorie Durant, Marjorie
 Merrweather Post, Joseph E. Davies, Eleanor Tydings
 and Joseph Tydings



Dina throws wedding bouquet from
 Great Hall staircase, March 23, 1946
 Photo Credit Hillwood Museum & Gardens



Construction of Rose Arbor, 1922
 Photo Courtesy, Winterthur Museum & Country Estate, Delaware



Rose Arbor, 1928
 Photo Courtesy, Winterthur Museum & Country Estate

MRS. T. W. DURANT'S
Eng. & Amer. Ch. Merlewood Hopeful

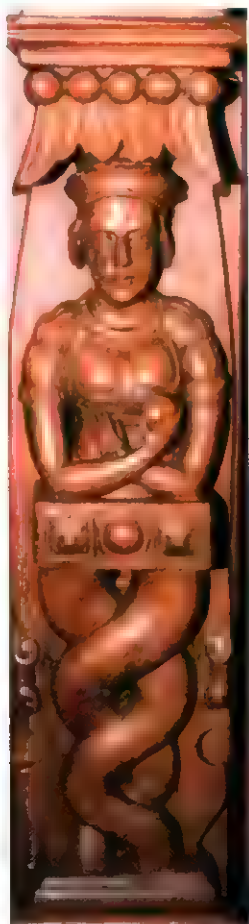


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1932 newspaper ad for Hillwood Kennels;
 daughter Adelaide operated a dog kennel on
 the estate during the 1930s



Wood carving in the library



A plaster figure of a child in the hallway of the children's wing



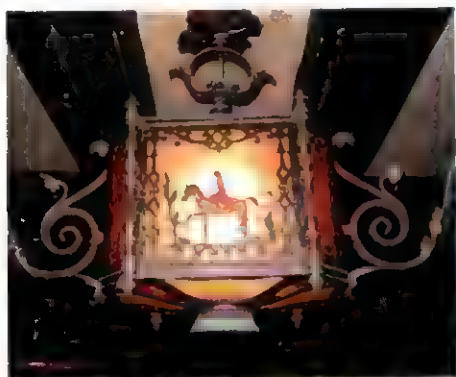
Wedgwood medallion that once adorned Marjorie's bedroom



Stained glass icon in the Great Hall



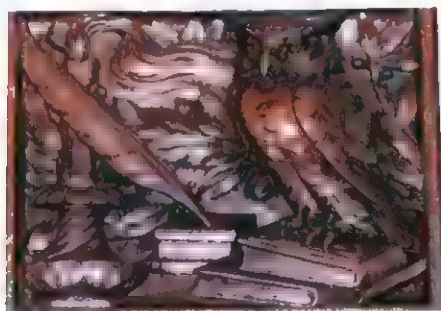
The Christmas Card Bathroom, now used as a small office equipment room for the Provost's Office



A bronze and leaded glass lantern, depicting a female and male on horseback, greets visitors at the entrance to the Great Hall



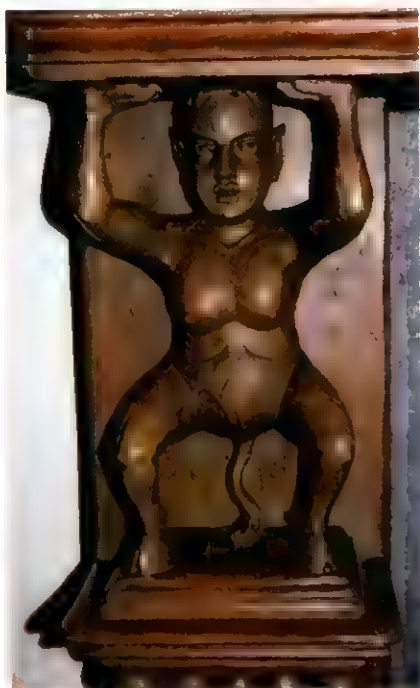
Image of Medusa over the doorway in the Venetian Room



Carved out above library door



Hanging lamp in the Venetian Room



Wood carving in the library

The Mansion Today



The mansion, which serves as the administration center for the C.W. Post Campus of Long Island University, was named Winnick House in 2002

*I*n June 2004, a multi-year renovation and restoration of Marjorie Merriweather Post's gracious home began. The funding for this \$8 million project came from C.W. Post alumnus Gary Winnick (Class of 1969), and the building is now named Winnick House.

Master craftsmen restored signature woodwork, replicated and replaced missing ornamentation on the building's facade, repaired and cleaned its distinctive triple-flue terracotta chimneys and recreated its grand entranceways. The mansion received a state-of-the-art heating, air conditioning and ventilation system, new plumbing and electrical upgrades. The large leaded glass windows of the Great Hall were refurbished and all of the window hardware has been restored to its original working order. On the Great Hall balcony, a decorative stained glass crest celebrating the C.W. Post Campus' 50th anniversary in 2004 overlooks the Great Lawn.



Children's wing soffit, on the south side

Today, the Campus administration keeps offices in the mansion: the chancellor, the provost and the associate provosts for student affairs, enrollment services, campus services, public relations and the dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

As it has since 1921, Marjorie Merriweather Post's Long Island home commands a sweeping, westward view over the Great Lawn. Its image appears more frequently than any other in advertisements for C.W. Post around Long Island and the New York City metropolitan area, and has become an instantly identifiable, almost iconic symbol of the Campus. Graced by exquisitely landscaped grounds and flanked by distinguished academic architecture developed over the past five decades, as well as the infrastructure necessary for a bustling institution of higher education, Marjorie's mansion remains the anchor of its surroundings.



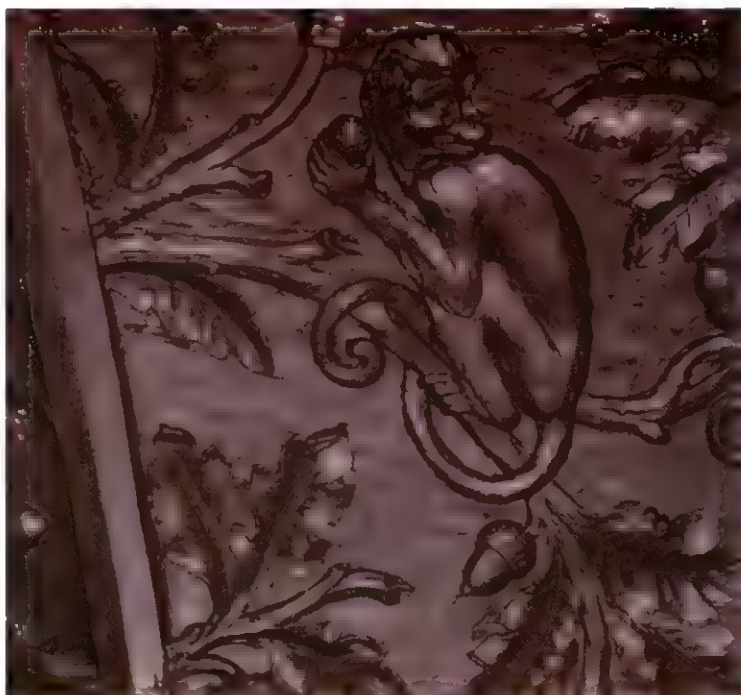
*This troll figure is a one-of-a-kind carving
beneath what had been Marjorie's marble
bathroom*



Medieval fool on corner of Venetian Room



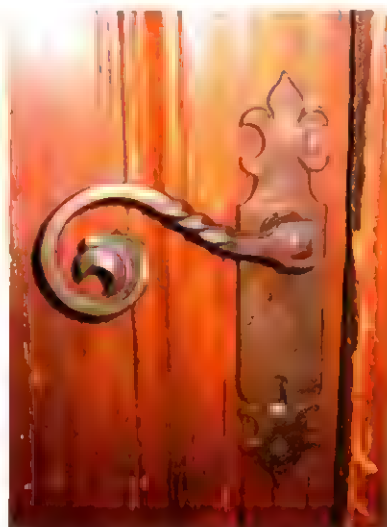
Decorative column below a former sleeping porch



Carving of monkey under Marjorie's master bathroom



Radiator cover in the Great Hall



A door handle in the Great Hall



A hunting scene under a sleeping porch



Removed from the basement in 2006, this original water filtration system consisted of two enormous filter tanks containing charcoal



Carvings on the south stairwell court



Arranged in a herringbone pattern over the west porte cochère, these burnt bricks were salvaged from condemned homes in New York City to achieve an aged look



Dog-like animal on the Great Lawn side of the house



Brick and stucco wall made to appear old and weathered. This area was restored in 2005.



A profile caricature in the Great Hall foyer. In authentic Elizabethan homes, this ornament would have contained images of the homeowner.

Testaments of the Past

Since 2004 and up until late 2007, master craftsmen renovating the mansion have uncovered a myriad of vintage ornamentation and household products that were installed during the home's original construction. Hand-painted wallpaper, blue tiles from a child's bathroom and a stairwell used by the staff to access their dining room were sealed behind sheet-rocked walls when the University adapted the mansion for administrative and academic use.

Post Brick

During the renovation, contractors found bricks emblazoned with the letters P O S T. It's no coincidence: they were made in Post, Texas, a city founded in 1907 by C.W. Post, the great American inventor and cereal maker. Manufactured in the 1920s by the Post Brick Company, the bricks were used for chimneys, decoration, walls and support throughout the mansion. Marjorie admired her father greatly and these bricks provide a sentimental connection to the man who significantly influenced her life.



Fire Extinguisher

This Shur Stop fire grenade, filled with water, was uncovered in an attic in 2006. Hundreds of these fire safety devices were hung from the attic rafters and would have plunged to the floor in the event of a fire.





Wallpaper

This wallpaper, with flowers and birds, graced the flower room originally located between the Great Hall entrance hall and the Hunt Room.

Curtain Box Label

In August 2006, carved wooden-panel curtain boxes in the Great Hall were removed temporarily during renovation. On the reverse side, hidden from the public for 84 years, was the hand-scribbled notes of the vendor – “E. W. Howell Hutton Job, Glen Head, Long Island, NY” – and a label for the company that carved the wood – “Geo. W. Duchemin Modeler and Wood Carver, Newark N.J.” This, along with other finds of this nature, confirmed that the interiors of the mansion were not imported from Europe.



Children's Bathroom Tile

Ceramic tile from Dina Merrill's childhood bathroom featured seagulls in flight on a sky and cloud motif.





Great Hall lamp

Post Office (Greenville, N.Y.), 18
 Potting Shed, 31
 Prime, Nina, 1, 2, 14, 16, 29, 31
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 Provost
 Library, 10
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Stained glass image from Great Hall entrance hall

Roof, 6
 Rose Arbor, 20, 21, 35, 39
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 Washington International School,
 Tregaron Campus, 14
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*Mansion kitchen, circa 1925
 Today this is the reception area for the dean of the
 College of Liberal Arts and Sciences*